

and our space shuttle from become an integral part of America's history, and as well American culture. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that NASA and its exploits in space is a tremendous motivating factor for young people to study math and science. Indeed, there is an entire generation of Americans who now work in areas of high technology, science and mathematics who were originally naturally motivated to get involved in that arena because of the space race and the tremendous attraction of space.

Indeed, when I travel around the United States and talk to teachers, one of the things I hear over and over again when I tell them where I am from, which is an area of Florida that includes Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral, when I tell them that, they invariably tell me that one of the things that helps them in motivating their kids to take an interest in the study of math and science is the space program and talking to them about the applications of our space program to the future.

Indeed, a recent poll that was released by the Zogby Organization bears up a lot of what I am talking about. This chart I have to my left here gets into this. They asked the following questions, and they had other questions, but I want to focus on these two statements. The first statement is: NASA and space exploration in general is a total waste of taxpayer dollars. The second statement is: the exploration of space is vital to the future of the United States and the world no matter what the cost.

I was very surprised, because amongst young people ages 18 to 29, by a ratio of almost 5 to 1, they supported the second statement rather than the first statement, which contends that space exploration is not important.

When we look at people ages 30 to 39, almost the same ratio, 5 to 1, support NASA. Even amongst the older generation, people over the age of 50, it is about a 2 to 1 ratio.

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It averages out, as I show here, to about three to one actually support the ongoing investment in space.

I know that NASA had a tough year last year in some of its areas. Certainly they had tremendous success, as well. There was the recent x-ray mapping mission involving the shuttle, which was a huge success. The Hubble repair mission, as well done by the shuttle, was a huge success. But as everybody knows, they had some failures on two probes that were supposed to go to Mars. I think what we need to do is certainly reassess and reevaluate our whole Mars program and how we are going about that.

It was originally proposed that this new approach would be called faster, better, cheaper. The idea in mind is

that you do not build a probe to Mars that takes 7 years to build, that costs \$1.5 billion, you build several smaller probes. This way, in case you lose one, the mission of exploring Mars can still move ahead.

I would assert that the fundamentals behind that philosophy were very, very good. It makes a lot of sense to have several smaller probes rather than one big one, because, indeed, in the past we have lost some of these big probes, which are very, very costly.

I would assert that the goal or the mission of faster, better, cheaper needs to be redefined to what it was originally intended to be, maybe something like smaller, swifter, and smarter. I believe that the intent was a good one to send multiple smaller probes, rather than one large probe.

I believe that the reassessment that is going on in the Mars program will ultimately end up yielding better value to the American taxpayer. If we are ever going to send people to Mars so that we can explore that planet, or indeed, even some day colonize Mars, it is critical that we send unmanned probes first to learn more about Mars.

Clearly, this poll shows us that the American people are still behind a strong effort to explore space. We are a Nation of pioneers. That is in our spirit. It should always remain in our spirit. I believe we need to reassess what we are doing with Mars and move ahead with the same kind of focus, indeed, where we are trying to get better value for the American taxpayer and gain knowledge of outer space.

BOLSTERING AMERICA'S DEFENSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, we just passed a supplemental appropriations bill which had what a lot of folks think was a fairly sizeable chunk of defense spending. It passed by a very large vote.

The vote surprised a number of Members, but I think the reason we had such a large vote, almost a three to one majority in favor of increased defense spending at this time, is because we have cut defense so drastically in the past.

I think most Americans do not realize that, actually, the defense budget we passed this year was approximately \$125 billion less than Ronald Reagan's defense budget of 1986.

Now, this chart here shows how defense spending has fallen like a rock over the last 13 years or so. Certainly the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the fall of the Soviet Empire, which incidentally, was brought about by America having a strong national defense,

but that dissolution means that we do not have to spend as much money on defense as we did in the 1980s.

However, it does not mean that we can absolutely abandon our troops. I am afraid this administration has put together a blueprint for defense over the next several years that, for practical purposes, abandons the troops. Let me go through some of the problems, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last 18 months or so, we have had about 80 crashes of American military aircraft. I have the crashes listed here. I know my colleagues cannot see this fine print, but that involved 90 dead pilots and crew members, and it involved almost every type of aircraft in the American inventory: helicopters, fixed wing, bombers, in some cases.

There was a reason for that. If we look at another graph, this graph shows how mission capability has dropped. Mission capability means the ability to turn on your airplane just like you would turn on the car in your driveway, put it in gear, make it go, and go off and do its mission and come back. So if I ask you, if you had two cars in your driveway and I called you up and said, what is your mission capability rate, and you said, just a minute, you went out, got in both the cars and tried to start them and only one would start and go into gear, you would come back to the phone and say, it is 50 percent, one out of two.

Our mission capability rate of our aircraft across the services over the last several years has been dropping because we are not spending enough money on spare parts, we are not spending enough time on training, do not have enough training money, and we have old airplanes, because we are not replacing the old airplanes with newer airplanes.

So if we look at the Air Force, it has gone from 83 percent mission capability down to 74 percent. That means about 25 percent of the airplanes cannot get off the ground in the Air Force today.

In the Marine Corps, it has dropped from 77 percent to 61 percent. That means about 40 percent of our marine aircraft cannot get off the ground today. In the Navy, it has gone from 69 percent to 61 percent. That means, again, about 40 percent of our Navy aircraft cannot get off the ground and go do their missions.

A lot of Americans do not realize that we have cut our forces down drastically. This chart shows that since Desert Storm, we have cut our forces in America almost in half. These red tanks indicate what we had in 1991, and the blue tanks indicate what we had in 1992 with respect to the Army. So we went from 18 Army divisions to only 10, 546 Navy ships to only about 316 today, and 36 fighter airwings to only about 20.

Unfortunately, the small military that we have today is not as ready to fight as the big military that we had a few years ago because we have cut funding for the military too drastically.

One thing that we have to look at today is the fact that we have cut the shipbuilding budget from a budget that supported almost 600 ships in the U.S. Navy to a budget that, if we build it out by 2020, we are only going to have a 200-ship Navy.

Ammo shortages, we have about a \$3.5 billion ammo shortage in the Army, a \$193 million shortage in the U.S. Marine Corps, and the list goes on. So we passed this supplemental today that had a \$4 billion military package in it that added spare parts, it added training time, it added health care for our retirees and our active duty people that they desperately need. It added a lot of the critical things that we need to make our military work.

It was absolutely necessary. I commend my colleagues for this first small step to rebuild America's defenses.

AMERICA'S ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I was amazed at the end of the business day today when there was a discussion on the floor as to whether or not the failure to extend the law that authorizes the strategic oil reserve, and the concerns that many Members have about the Energy Department, somehow means that the Congress of the United States is responsible for the failure to have an energy policy for the last 7 years. It is exactly the kind of wrong-headed thinking that has allowed us to lull ourselves as a Nation into where we are today with gasoline prices, with heating oil prices.

Certainly nobody is going to release the strategic oil reserve if that authorization is not extended for a few days. I think there is a very legitimate question as to who should control the strategic oil reserve. Should it be the Department of Energy or should it be the Department of Defense? What is the purpose of a strategic oil reserve? Is it militarily strategic, or is it strategic in some other way?

In fact, what has happened for the last 7 years is that on all three fronts that we needed to have an energy policy, we have not had an effective energy policy. We have not dealt with the oil-producing nations that we have come to rely too much on for oil and gasoline. We have done everything we could to discourage domestic production. We have not done anything to encourage alternative sources of energy, and in fact, the Secretary of Energy on February 16 said that we were caught

napping at the Department of Energy. The administration really did not expect to see these oil prices go up.

That is the same Department of Energy that there were Members on this floor just a few minutes ago saying should unquestionably be given an extended ability to manage the energy policy of the United States. It is part of the same administration that, for 7 years, has really managed to perform the governmental hat trick of looking at the three areas that we ought to be thinking about for more energy independence and doing everything possible to insure that we would have more energy dependence.

We saw the Secretary of Energy in the last few days and weeks going to those oil-producing nations that in the past have been our dependable allies, certainly we have been their dependable ally, and acting as if it was a huge deal to have a small concession of increased production from those countries.

Whenever those countries, some of those countries, came to us and said, we would like young American men and women to come over and defend our country, we did not have the response that, well, we will see if we can do a little something, and we will do it, and we will let you know when it might happen. It will be out there sometime.

That was not our response. Now to assume that that is an acceptable response, something is wrong. Either something is wrong with our relationship with those countries, or something has been wrong in maintaining that relationship.

In terms of alternative sources, the Secretary of Energy just a couple of Sundays ago said maybe the answer is wind power. Well, the answer may not be wind power, the answer may be brain power. The answer may be looking at what we can do to ensure that we are not caught in this same situation 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 years from now, to become increasingly dependent on foreign oil, to do nothing to encourage alternative energy sources in this country, to do everything to discourage domestic supply.

To do everything to really put the internal combustion engine at risk without coming up with any alternatives is an economic travesty. Our economy has some jeopardy right now because of a failure of policy.

For our colleagues to stand up here and say that the Department of Energy needs to be congratulated for what they have done in energy, or the Department of Energy needs to be extended into the future without any question, or that if this Congress questions the Department of Energy, somehow the Congress becomes automatically responsible for the failures of that department and this administration for the last 7 years in this area,

does not really meet the test of credibility on this floor or in the country.

I think we need to look very carefully at where we are, how we got here, and what the Department of Energy has had to do with those results that are likely to lead to \$2 gas prices and significant challenges to our economy this summer.

OPPOSING CONTINUED U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE BALKAN CONFLICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, we have no business in Kosovo. We have no overriding national interest there.

We have heard much vaunted allegations of human rights violations leveled against the Serbian government. Unfortunately, once again, we come to find out that an administration determined to mire us in overseas turmoil has greatly exaggerated the situation to win over a skeptical public and stampede the Congress.

In this case, we were told several months ago that as many as 100,000 Albanian Kosovars were brutally murdered. Now we are looking at a figure closer to 1,000.

What of our continually expanded bombing that eventually included not only public transportation but medical facilities, nearly 100 schools, churches, and homes? What of the innocent deaths we inflicted with tax dollars of the citizens of the United States? What have we done here? What were the objectives of our President's most recent adventure? What are the results?

We were told when we went into Kosovo that we went there to stop ethnic cleansing. It continues with a vengeance, this time with the acquiescence of our own forces.

The KLA, not 2 years ago classified by our own State Department as a heroin-financed terrorist organization, soon to be vaunted by the Clinton administration as freedom fighters, now roams the countryside brutalizing innocents, not only Serbs but gypsies, Muslims, Slavs, and Albanians opposed to their thuggishness.

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Bishop Artemije of the Diocese of Kosovo stated one month ago before the Helsinki Commission, and I quote, "More than 80 Orthodox churches have been either completely destroyed or severely damaged since the end of the war. The ancient churches, many of which survived 500 years of Ottoman Moslem rule, could not survive 8 months of the internationally guaranteed peace. Regretfully, all this happens in the presence of KFOR, the NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo, and the U.N."